



Open Channels

New Orleans District - Prepared and Ready

By Susan Spaht
Task Force Hope

The 2007 hurricane season is here and the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers is prepared and ready.

Since Hurricane Katrina hit the area almost two years ago, numerous improvements have been made toward hurricane preparedness and response, including improved communications, additional storm monitoring and area-wide coordination, not to mention the vast improvements to the hurricane protection system itself which will be outlined in the next issue of the Status Report Newsletter.

The last issue introduced the Joint Communication Advisory Council, a group of communications professionals representing several area agencies and government entities involved in hurricane preparedness and protection. The JCAC is poised to respond with coordinated advisories should a major storm or hurricane threaten this area. The Corps of Engineers is a participant.

Chain of command

On Aug. 29, 2005, there was not a clear chain of command in place for the cities and parishes, the state, the four levee districts, numerous federal agencies and other emergency response organizations. Today, four

levee districts have been narrowed to two (the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – East, and the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority – West), and they have been meeting regularly with each other, with the Corps of Engineers and with other emergency response organizations in the area to hammer out an organized jurisdictional plan in the event of a major storm.

Communications and monitoring systems

“We have established multiple communications and monitoring systems,” said Col. Richard Wagenaar, Commander of the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers. “Starting at our division headquarters in Vicksburg, Miss., to our command centers here at the district and at Port Allen, we have back-up communications systems to ensure that we maintain contact with each other and with appropriate outside agencies.”

Corps emergency personnel will be equipped with state police and Emergency Operations Center radios, as well as satellite phones, cell phones and Blackberries with out-of-state numbers in the event that local cell towers go down, as they did during Katrina. Back-up communications systems are also planned for

emergency centers at numerous southeast Louisiana parishes. This will give the Corps the availability to call on additional manpower or equipment if needed.

The Corps will follow a newly established communications matrix to ensure that local, state and federal officials are kept informed on all critical steps taken, including outfall canal gate closings.

There is a communications plan and system in place for the operators of the Corps’ outfall canal gates and pumps, and the operators of the two parishes’ interior pump stations.

The purpose here is control of outfall canal water levels by coordinating pump capacity from the interior pump stations to the outfall canal pump structures at Lake Pontchartrain, particularly at the huge 17th Street Canal. “We will have Corps personnel stationed at the Sewerage & Water Board’s interior pump stations and at the outfall canal pump structures,” said Chris Accardo, Operations Chief, “and they will be communicating with each other to coordinate water levels in a storm event.”

(see Hurricane, next page)



-Hurricane-

An important component of the storm-monitoring system is the new Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition equipment which has been installed at the three outfall canals and at the Harvey Canal. SCADA is a high-tech information and control system that will measure water levels at the canals. "And we've assigned highly trained personnel to operate the equipment," Accardo said. If the situation at the canals gets rough, the operators will fall back to SCADA equipment at the district command center. If the storm situation gets worse, the operators can take the SCADA computers and seek refuge in the Corps' Leake Avenue bunker. Of course, the systems are backed up by alternate power sources.

Manned outpost locations

During a major storm, Mississippi Valley Division Headquarters at Vicksburg, Miss., will direct emergency operations until command is established closer to the storm. "We are here, we are on the ground and we know the territory," said Col. Wagenaar. "At the end of the day, all emergencies are local."

A team has been established for the Corps' Emergency Operations Center on Leake Avenue, and key positions have already been assigned with a high-level Corps engineer coordinating emergency responses.

About 20 high-level engineers and managers will be posted at the Port of Greater Baton Rouge in Port

Allen which is the Corps' established staging ground for equipment, supplies and skilled workers. Corps boats and ships can return executive staff to New Orleans by water if land transportation is inaccessible.

Trained crews will also be assigned to the locks at Algiers, Harvey and the Inner Harbor Navigational Canal to monitor installations and storm activities.

Preparation is key

Corps personnel have been participating in emergency training exercises internally and at the outfall canals, as well as with local, state and other federal agencies. The Corps has also pre-placed emergency equipment at strategic locations, including sandbags, HESCO baskets, sheet

piles, water tubes and pumps. It also has contracts in place for possibly needed emergency services and supplies.

"If we have a major storm this season," said Col. Wagenaar, "we're ready."

"We have the command centers in place, we have the communication systems and equipment we need, we are coordinated with the other local, state and federal emergency agencies, and our people are confident."

"We live here too," the commander added, "we have a personal interest and professional duty to do our very best to save lives and protect property."

Open Channels **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** **Mississippi Valley Division**



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Open Channels is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1.

It is published quarterly and distributed electronically, by the Public Affairs Office, US Army Engineer Division, Mississippi Valley.

Views and opinions expressed in the publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

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Generally Speaking

by Brig. Gen. Robert Crear
Commander
Mississippi Valley Division



In June, we celebrate the 232nd anniversary of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Therefore, this month I want to share with you my thoughts on the past year's highlights:

MVD

The division has made significant progress in its effort to work and develop as an interdependent regional team.

Ten regional SOPs have been approved in the last year and several more are in draft form and working their way through the approval process.

Three quarters of the tasks in the Senior Leader's Training Conference PMP have been completed and the remaining are on track to be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

We received many positive comments on our level of regionalization during the FY 07 Command Strategic Review.

Regional Rates

Back in FY 05, MVD was the pilot for USACE to implement Regional Rates across our division.

This effort was three fold:

- Working functionally,
- Taking care of district staff, and
- Effectively utilizing all resources

Essentially, we embarked on a new journey:

- To ensure that our technical competences were adequately covered and available throughout the region,
- To ensure that our technical competences were maintained properly in order to perform our mission well,
- To ensure that we prudently and effectively used our resources to take care of our people and retain the needed expertise to meet mission challenges without negative impacts to our people, and
- To improve support to our customers by providing the best quality service....at the least cost....in the most responsive manner.

Regional rates has been successful and adopted USACE wide.

As we work toward future mission challenges, we continue to complete our After Action Reviews to ensure we are meeting the customer's needs in the best manner possible and to continually improve and enhance our future operations.

Most of these activities have been transparent to our customers. In addition, we have been able to better utilize our resources, which has broad implications such as the engineer and

construction workforce sharing activities and actualizing our new business model of interdependency between the districts within our RBC, etc.

We still have some cultural challenges to overcome and anomalies of support between districts, but we are making great strides to improve our overall operational activities and support to the customer.

Regional rates will have long-term impacts and ultimately help USACE to prudently minimize our costs and provide better support to our customers.

Communities of Practice

Conference calls with MVD headquarters and districts are held every other week. Face-to-face meetings are held six times a year. This has drastically increased the ability to work regionally and share lessons learned.

The new Regional Quality Management System is on track for being completed and implemented this year. The Quality Management Regional Team is comprised of a representative from each district and they have been developing a "quality management web portal". All our regional processes will be placed on this web portal.

Regional functional proponents have been identified within the Engineering CoP, which will focus on maintaining technical competency and supporting other districts within the region in the functional areas assigned.

(see General, page 16)



New Chief of Engineers visits New Orleans

By Susan Spaht
Task Force Hope

On May 17, Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp became the 52nd Chief of Engineers and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He assumed the position from Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock who retired after 36 years of military service.

May 29, the new Chief of Engineers kept a promise. He made his first official trip as Chief on a visit to New Orleans. On his three-day tour of the area, he vowed to restore public trust in the Corps of Engineers and restore its credibility, and to meet its commitment to improve the hurricane protection system to the 100-year standard by 2011.

“The number one domestic priority of the Corps of Engineers,” said the new Chief, “is the restoration and construction of the hurricane protection system.”

Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1972. He earned a Master of Science degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Michigan, and a Master of Business Administration degree from Long Island University in New York. He is a registered professional engineer.

Before accepting the position as 52nd Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp was the Commanding General, U.S. Army Accessions Command and Deputy Commanding General for Initial Military Training at Fort Monroe, Va. He has held



Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, the new Chief of Engineers and Commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, greets employees of the New Orleans District on May 31 during his first official trip as Chief. (USACE Photo by Anne Marino)

numerous command assignments including the 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Saudi Arabia and Iraq.

During his recent visit to New Orleans, Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp visited hurricane-damaged areas, inspected the Corps’ construction sites and met with local elected officials and community

groups to see firsthand what has happened to this area and what needs to be done.

“There’s such great promise and hope for this city to get back on its feet,” the general said, “and to be even better than it was.”

To read the full biography of Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp, go to this Web site: <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/releases/ltgvan.htm>

“We’re Going to Protect This City to the 100-Year Level by 2011 or Break Our Backs Trying....”
-Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp





St. Louis District Safety Day

By Alan Dooley
St. Louis District



The St. Louis District “laughed and learned” about safety during a one-hour audience participation safety day program conducted in the District headquarters in downtown St. Louis and by teleconference with outlying lake projects.

Safety’s usually not a laughing matter. But for an hour, June 6, a lot of laughs were mixed in with the serious admonition to “Get in the safety zone.” More than 200 district personnel crowded into the downtown St. Louis headquarters building auditorium there, while dozens more hooked up by teleconference from the district’s five lake projects, to laugh and learn about serious safety issues.

“When we scheduled this weeks ago, Col. Setliff threw down the challenge: ‘Be creative.’ I think we succeeded beyond our wildest expectations,” said District Safety Officer, Katherine Meadows.

Understanding that “death by Powerpoint” isn’t always the most effective way to convey a message, a small committee decided to stage a safety program in the format of the well-known television game show, Jeopardy.

They also decided to substitute fashion demonstrations of the proper personal protective equipment during “commercial breaks.”

With questions coming fast and furious for five teams of “red” and “blue” volunteer contestants from the district family, the contest hung in the balance until the “red” team captured 1000 points on the final question, to eek out a narrow victory.

Afterward, comments ranged from, “I’d better bone up on that, I missed too many questions,” to “That was both informative and about the most laughs I’ve had at work, ever.” Into the next day, several people were overheard arguing the finer points of several safety questions that were raised.

“Red” or “blue” – it made no difference for whom you rooted. Everyone who took part gained a lot of information and had fun doing it. One hour of urging everyone to be safe in all they do is still resonating loudly throughout the 28,000-square-mile district 24 hours later.



Brunet receives Department of the Army auditing award

By Shannon Bauer
St. Paul District



Individual Award for Auditing to Burnsville, Minn., resident and Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District resource manager Randal Brunet.

This award is given out annually to recognize excellence in auditing throughout the Department of the Army. Brunet received his award from the American Society of Military Comptrollers National Professional Development Institute, in Kansas City, Mo., May 30.

Brunet is the chief of the St. Paul District's resource management office. He received this award for volunteering to deploy to the Gulf Coast early in 2006 to assist in auditing work associated with Hurricane

Katrina recovery efforts, as well as consistently performing his home duties in an exemplary manner.

Brunet has been a federal employee for more than 34 years, 27 with the St. Paul District.

"Brunet is one of the most respected resource managers in the Corps of Engineers," said Col. Michael Pfenning, commander of the St. Paul District. "He performs his duties with the highest degree of selfless service and personal sacrifice, and he epitomizes the principles of sound public administration and prudent stewardship of the public trust."

The Department of the Army recently awarded its fiscal year 2006

Memphis District takes honors in four FEA categories

By Jim Pogue
Photos by Willie McClendon
Memphis District

The Memphis District and its employees were honored May 8 with four awards from the Federal Executive Association here. Recognized for outstanding achievement were:

- James Ward in the Outstanding Trade/Craft Employee category.
- Carl Hammitte in the Outstanding Wage Grade Employee category.
- Vernesler "Nessa" Lewis in the Outstanding Disabled Employee category.
- The entire Memphis District in the Outstanding Public Service category (second year in a row).

Outstanding Trade/Craft Employee

James Ward currently serves as a welder for the Memphis District Bank Grading Unit. His nomination document states, "He has shown through his selfless service that he is willing to 'go the extra mile' to meet the goals and needs of an essential mission."

With more than 30 years of federal service, he is known for his hard work and dedication and is willing to do anything to complete the mission assigned. As a master welder, Ward "displays such a high level of skill and confidence that co-workers, managers and personnel from several division

offices are constantly seeking his service."

Among his many contributions, Ward was singled out for work he has done in support of the Vicksburg, Little Rock and Rock Island districts, work on the M/V Mississippi, the dredge Jadwin, and maintenance and repair work on the bank grading unit's large bucket ... work which potentially saved taxpayers \$50,000 each day had that equipment been out of operation. Finally, officials recognized Ward for his contributions to the Hurricane Katrina recovery effort as a member of the hired labor crews working in the New Orleans area.

(see FEA, next page)



-FEA-



FEA 2nd Vice President Julie Garcia, Matt Pierce accepting for James Ward and keynote speaker Mearl Purvis

Outstanding Wage Grade Employee

Carl Hammitte is an Engineering Equipment Operator Leaderman and is in charge of the Memphis District hired labor crews working for the New Orleans District's Hurricane Protection Office. He has shown, through his selfless service, a willingness to meet the goals and needs of this essential mission for the Corps of Engineers.



Julie Garcia, Carl Hammitte and Mearl Purvis

In his current assignment, Hammitte has met all requirements asked of him while working for Task Force Unwatering, Task Force Guardian and the HPO and has become a recognized leader among his hired labor crews. After the initial task of breaching levees to unwater lower Plaquemines Parish, the next step was rebuilding the levee system.

When Memphis District leaders tasked the hired labor crews with digging borrow for levee placement, officials directed Hammitte to oversee these operations because of his expertise, trustworthiness, dedication and desire to undertake unique and challenging missions.

The mission was to excavate soil from four borrow pits located several miles apart in the New Orleans area. The process included excavation, sometimes more than 20 feet below the water table, then drying the saturated material in a location easily accessible to contractors, who retrieved and hauled it to a levee construction site. The crews he oversaw initiated almost daily improvements to borrow pit excavation operations which saved taxpayers millions of dollars.

Additionally, while overseeing these operations, Hammitte routinely operated a variety of equipment including cranes, track hoes, bulldozers and off-road dump trucks associated with the operation. He also performed any welding that was needed and any other duties needed to accomplish the mission.

Outstanding Disabled Employee

Vernesler Lewis wears two hats at the Memphis District as the Administrative Support Assistant for Project Operations and Readiness Branches. When asked how to describe "Nessa" teammates from these branches use words like: amazing, tenacious, caring, inspiring, proficient, dedicated and, yes, even sassy. It is no wonder because most of these are things to which she aspires.



Julie Garcia, Nessa Lewis and Mearl Purvis

In her interview for her position, she was asked: "What strength would you bring to the job?" Without a moment's hesitation, she answered, "I show people what can be done with determination and hard work. If I can accomplish all that I have from this chair, people will know that they can accomplish their goals as well." In typical Nessa fashion, she added, "And, I'm not finished yet."

Throughout her life, this spirit and tenacity have shone through. While a 17-year-old junior in high school, Nessa was in an accident that placed her in a wheel chair. The accident may have necessitated three months of home schooling, but it did not affect her grades. Approximately one year after her accident, she graduated not only on time, but also as salutatorian of her class. During her first semester at The University of Memphis in fall of 1996, Nessa had to withdraw from all her classes when she became pregnant.

Unfortunately, it was after the date to withdraw from classes. This was a true case of not knowing what to expect when you're expecting.

(see FEA, next page)



-FEA-

After her twins, Guy and Jai, were delivered in 1997, Nessa returned to the university in 1999. She overcame her starting 0.0 GPA and graduated in 2002 with a bachelor's in Business Administration.

Her early life indicates the type of drive and dedication that she brought to the Corps when she came on board in April of 2004. Nessa's time is split between Project Ops and Readiness branch. However, during declared emergencies, she is a full-time member of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Staff.



Memphis District FEA award nominees and officials, left to right, Carl Hammitte, Matt Pierce, Kevin Williams, Shellie McGee, Cecelia Williams, Col. Charles Smithers, Nessa Lewis, Maj. Vince Navarre, Regina Kuykendoll, Alex Cooper, Kevin Woods, Phillip Pinkston and Jack Hurdle.

Outstanding Public Service

Employees and leaders of Memphis District deployed to Louisiana on Aug. 29, 2005, to establish the Louisiana Recovery Field Office after the landfall of Hurricane Katrina (and later Hurricane Rita). The district remains responsible for the recovery efforts in Louisiana and our employees continue to serve the citizens of Louisiana. Initially, the mission of the LA RFO was to help the citizens of Louisiana recover from the devastating effects of the hurricane events by providing emergency power, ice, water, temporary roofing, debris removal and the repair of critical public facilities.

The LA RFO completed the mission to deliver emergency supplies of ice and water, as well as the 'unwatering' of the New Orleans area, in 2005. The LA RFO continued executing the recovery missions in Louisiana and took on some new missions assigned by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in 2006.

Here are some of the highlights of the District's 2006 work in Louisiana:

- The LA RFO completed the emergency power mission on May 1, 2006. Members of our District serving on the deployed response power teams coordinated with local officials to either contract or set-up emergency generators in the affected Parishes to restore power to critical facilities, such as hospitals, police stations, pumping stations, and other government offices in order to restore basic services until public power generation came back on-line.
- The LA RFO completed the critical public facilities mission on Aug. 23, 2006. We re-established public facilities by installing temporary buildings or repairing structures. These include the entire Southern University-New Orleans campus, several elementary and junior high schools in affected parishes and parishes where evacuees overloaded the local school

system, several New Orleans municipal facilities, i.e. fire stations, police, and public works buildings and the St. Bernard Medical Facility to name a few.

- Our employees set-up 11 satellite offices at various locations around southwest Louisiana to explain to the public the process for completing the appropriate right-of-entry documents needed to get help with removing debris from their property. Additionally, our employees manage the contractors who remove the debris and the landfills designated for disposal of the debris. In 19 of the 20 parishes receiving this assistance, more than 95 percent of the debris has been removed from private property. In the city of New Orleans, more than 85 percent of this debris has been removed. We have removed more than 27 million cubic yards of debris and managed 29 landfills opened for the disposal of all that debris.

(see FEA, next page)



-FEA-

- Our employees also took on newly assigned missions from FEMA in the past year. On Aug. 25, 2006, FEMA assigned us the mission to remove dead trees from public and private property that had been killed by exposure to salt water. On Oct. 10, 2006, FEMA transferred responsibility for the Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Center from the Environmental Protection Agency to the LA RFO. Our employees have collected more than five million containers of HHW.
 - Our real estate specialists meet and negotiate with property owners for land or building space to set up satellite and field offices, negotiate right of way authority to gain access to affected areas for recovery operations, and set up leases for any operations required by FEMA. When FEMA decided to move their headquarters from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, our real estate specialists coordinated a location for the LA RFO in downtown New Orleans. Our employees made the move without a pause in operations on July 1, 2006.
 - Our contracting officers in the LA RFO continue to meet and discuss contract actions with local contractors and their sub-contractors in order to attempt to award work to residents in the affected area and begin to rebuild the local economy. In 2006, we awarded and administered 302 contract actions valued at over \$1.1 billion.
 - Throughout the operation of the LA RFO, our employees routinely had contact with the local (and sometimes national) media who were searching for the latest news on the status of our missions. Our employees also served as spokespersons in local and state-run public meetings, answering questions raised by the general public on the status of our missions and discussing our capabilities and timeline for accomplishing missions.
 - Our employees served as part of Task Force Guardian responsible for restoring the hurricane protection level surrounding the southeastern parishes of Louisiana. Our employees operated borrow pits, removed fill material and built up levees that protected the residential areas along the levee system. TF Guardian completed their mission on time and restored the hurricane protection system to pre-Katrina standards by June 2006. Our employees continue to serve by developing construction plans and specifications for the newly established Hurricane Protection Office.
 - Our district has deployed 211 personnel to the LA RFO with some of those on multiple deployments. This is significant since our district has the smallest work force (only 518 full time employees) among our larger sister-districts in the Mississippi Valley Division.
- Other Memphis District employees nominated for awards were:
- Jack H. Hurdle, Outstanding Managerial/Executive Award.
 - Kevin Williams, Outstanding Supervisor Award.
 - Dennis Abernathy, Outstanding Program/Project Manager.
 - Regina L. Kuykendoll, Outstanding Scientific/Professional Employee Award.
 - Wendell N. Norman, Outstanding Specialist Award.
 - Phillip E. Pinkston, Outstanding Technical Award.
 - Cecelia L. Williams, Outstanding Administrative Assistant & Secretary Award.
 - Alexandra "Alex" D. Cooper, Outstanding Clerical Award.
 - Shellie M. McGee, Outstanding Achievement in Equal Employment Opportunity/Equal Opportunity.
 - Revetment Section, Group Award for Service or Product Improvement.
- The Federal Executive Association presented the awards at a luncheon held at the Naval Support Activity Mid-South, Millington, Tenn.
- Congratulations to all the award recipients and nominees.



Durham-Aguilera new director of Task Force Hope

by Susan Spaht
Task Force Hope



Karen Durham-Aguilera, P.E., has been appointed as the new Director of Task Force Hope, part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division. As director, she is responsible for overseeing the Corps' \$5.7 billion hurricane protection system work in New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana, and the long-term planning

of coastal restoration and hurricane damage reduction.

Durham-Aguilera, a member of the Corps' elite Senior Executive Service, replaced Dan Hitchings who served as the first Director of Task Force Hope. Durham-Aguilera began transition meetings with Hitchings as far back as December 2006 in preparation for the important post, and officially took over the reigns of the job in early March.

In her previous position as Director of Programs for the Corps' Northwestern Division, Durham-Aguilera was responsible for civil works and military programs that included hydroelectric, navigation, flood damage reduction and endangered species recovery projects in an area that covered about 25 percent of the continental United States.

A registered professional engineer in the state of Louisiana, Durham-Aguilera holds a bachelor's degree in engineering and a master's degree in civil (geotechnical)

engineering, both from the University of Louisville.

In 2005, she served as Director of the Reconstruction Programs, Project and Contracting office in Baghdad, Iraq. In that position she was responsible for planning, coordination, contracting acquisition and execution of nearly 3,200 projects spanning the nation of Iraq.

For several years, Durham-Aguilera served on the Army's Career Board for Engineers and Scientists. Her recognitions include the Bronze Order of the DeFleury Medal, Joint Civilian Service, Meritorious Service, Superior Civilian Service Awards and Commander's Awards. She was also selected as the Corps of Engineers' 1990 Southwestern Division Engineer of the Year and the 1993 Federal Engineer of the Year.

Durham-Aguilera recently moved her household from Portland, Ore., to her new home in New Orleans and looks forward to being part of this historic mission.

Louisiana recovery contracting officer recognized nationally for Katrina-Rita management

by Michael Logue
Louisiana Recovery Field Office

The contracting officer who managed the critical U. S. Army Corps of Engineers response contracts for such key Louisiana recovery issues as Operation Blue Roof, New Orleans unwatering, replacing damaged and destroyed schools and public facilities, and the massive demolition and debris removal program has been recognized

nationally for response and improving Corps contracting processes in an unprecedented situation.

Jean Todd has been awarded the General Services Administration's 2007 Ida Ustad Award for Excellence in Acquisition. The award recognizes the individual government employee who embodies the contract specialist



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-Todd-

as business leader/advisor having a major impact on improving the acquisition process.

“Jean was faced with the tremendously difficult acquisition challenges of un-watering the city of New Orleans and removing debris generated by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita,” said Sandra Riley, the Corps’ director of contracting in Washington, D.C.

“Within days, she skillfully established an on-site, full service Contracting Office in Baton Rouge, using innovative strategies to accomplish a \$2-billion mission under unbelievably traumatic circumstances.” The Louisiana Recovery Field Office moved to New Orleans in 2006 as work in other parishes ended.

Riley said the sheer volume of work performed at the Louisiana Recovery Field Office in 40 parishes at the request of the Federal Emergency Management Agency is a success story in and of itself. If the work was done by the recovery office, Todd had a hand in it and her stamp of approval on it.

“Ms. Todd managed over \$2 billion in contract awards associated with hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The Louisiana Recovery Field Office has cleaned up more than 27 million cubic yards of debris, demolished over 6,200 structures, replaced 310 critical school buildings and public facilities, and roofed over 81,000 buildings after two major hurricanes and the New Orleans flooding – a task that has never been done before!” Riley said.

An average Corps field contracting office may manage about \$100 million in contracts annually.

Todd also was recognized for her efforts to guide contracts to small and local businesses. The Louisiana Recovery Field Office awarded over \$175 million to small businesses with almost \$1 billion in subcontracts going to small and disadvantaged businesses.

On the home front, 45 percent of the Corps’ recovery subcontracted dollars have gone to Louisiana firms. The Louisiana Recovery Field Office has awarded 395 contracts to large and small Louisiana businesses, 286 of those going to small business.

“Through her untiring efforts, Jean helped improve the quality of life for the Louisiana residents who were affected by not just one, but two natural disasters,” Riley said.

Todd Reflects

“After landfall, I had the back end of a Ford Explorer in Memphis fully loaded with contracts,” she said. She then drove for hours to find the Corps ready for her to create a workplace. Contracts had to be issued for phones, computers, tables, chairs, everything, before Corps recovery efforts could even begin, followed by contracts for companies with tens of thousands of workers needed to set the stage for Louisiana recovery.

“I could not have been successful without giving full credit to my staff at the RFO and my staff at my home district in Memphis,” she said. “This is definitely not a one-man show!”

Todd’s job is measured in goals, end results and bottom lines.

So she focuses on making sure contracts and the resulting work on the ground is “efficient, effective and



An East Baton Rouge student uses a picture of Clifford the Dog to thank Jean Todd for her work in securing new classrooms in East Baton Rouge. Todd contracted for hundreds of temporary classrooms after Hurricane Katrina.

legal, and what we’re doing here reflects positively on the Corps as we assist the recovery process in Louisiana.

Success in any endeavor always has a few bumps in the road, and Todd sized up the challenge.

“In being diligent in following the acquisition process, in full compliance with the law, often it just takes time,” she says, and time isn’t usually what people have too much of when responding to emergencies.

“The mission consumed me,” she said. “I feel strongly it is something we as a nation and the Corps need to do. I’ve done things I never dreamed of doing.”

Todd recalled ribbon cuttings and dedications of Corps-installed FEMA temporary classrooms that returned normalcy to students and parents in East Baton Rouge Parish.

“The bottom line is the people piece of this – helping people recover – to see their faces light up,” Todd said. “That’s why we do this.”



District Collaborates With Arsenal, Public to House Soldiers

By Mark Kane
Rock Island District

A shortage of family housing on Rock Island Arsenal has the Army in pursuit of off-post housing to accommodate an influx of Soldiers due to the formation of the Army Sustainment Command, as well as gaining Soldiers from First Army. Real Estate is teaming with the Housing Office at the Arsenal to secure 50 residential leases in the local community by the end of July.

“These leases will be for one year with up to four year options at a fair and reasonable market value,” said Tim Fiscus, a reality specialist in Real Estate and a lead for the housing program initiative.

Fiscus is asking for assistance from real estate agents, developers, homeowners, property managers, tax assessors, appraisers, and community activities familiar with the Quad Cities housing market to track down leads as well.

The Army’s basic housing allowance in this area, to cover rent and utilities, ranges from \$800 to \$1,400 per month. However, rent alone — not including utilities — for that sized housing runs between \$800 and \$1,500 for this area, said Fiscus.

“We are looking for quality housing,” he said. “It doesn’t have to be a mansion, but it has to be decent, safe and sanitary.”

To facilitate the acquisition process, the Corps brought in the Corps’ National Domestic Lease Team, who have assisted local communities in other locations across the country with development of affordable quality housing in both rental and sales markets. Noreen Dean Dresser and John Brown will be

working with Fiscus to encourage new development and expansion of the rental market.

The Army is interested in a variety of building designs located within a 20 to 30 mile commuting distance of the Arsenal. Potential structures include single-family homes, townhouses, duplexes, apartments and other configurations. At this time, mobile homes and trailers are not eligible for consideration through the program.

Alan Wilson, the Rock Island Arsenal Garrison manager, has said the top priority of the Arsenal is to ensure our military and their Families have the best possible quality of life and that begins with quality housing.

“This is an excellent rental opportunity for residential landlords who have three and four bedroom single-family houses, townhouses, condominiums, and duplexes (that are energy efficient) to support our Soldiers and their Families,” said Wilson.

Currently, the Army is undergoing a transformation that requires units be realigned and troops to be reassigned at various locations around the world.

These changes have caused more Soldiers to be assigned to the Arsenal, which has significantly increased the demand for Family housing on and off the installation.

The Army typically houses 70 percent of its troops on-post with the other 30 percent residing in the surrounding community, according to Marsha Marcellus, manager for the housing program for the Arsenal.



However, new guidance calls for a shift in these numbers with more Soldiers living off-post.

“The Army recommendation is to fully utilize community assets in order to meet the military housing requirement on the installation,” said Marcellus.

“We need the public’s help to ensure that we have enough housing for our Soldiers and their Families when they arrive in the Quad Cities,” said Stephen Clark, chief of the Environmental Real Estate Office for the Arsenal. “If people have homes available for rent, we would like to hear from them as soon as possible.”

Realtors or owners of property that appear to meet the Army’s housing criteria may contact Fiscus at (309) 794-5696. A representative will assist them through the registration process to ensure that quality housing is provided to Soldiers and their Families.

“The Quad-City community has always been willing to step forward and assist the military when needed, so we are once again asking for that assistance, Marcellus said.

Ed Tibbetts, Quad-City Times, contributed to this article.



Repair Work starts at Melvin Price Locks and Dam

By Nicole Dalrymple
photos by Alan Dooley
St. Louis District

Work to repair and replace important parts of the 1200-foot main chamber at the Melvin Price Locks and Dam started at 6 a.m. Thursday morning, May 10.

As work began in early morning hours, river barge tows were diverted to the 600-foot auxiliary chamber at the facility near Alton, Ill.

The work, scheduled during a 54-day period slated to end July 3, calls for removing and upgrading the lock chambers downstream miter gates and replacing electric motors and more than two miles of 1-1/2 inch steel cables the raise and lower the upstream lift gates.



The Illinois leaf, or the miter gate closest to the Illinois shore was the first to be lifted from the Mel price Locks and Dam main chamber Thursday morning, May 11. It is seen here lifted part way from the water. Each gate leaf is 54 feet high and 65 feet wide, and tips the scales at 220 tons, only five tons less than the Statue of Liberty.

On the first day of work, while the downstream gate leafs were being prepared to be removed, a dive team from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Rock Island District inspected preparations to place steel bulkheads that will enable work on the giant lift gates in the dry. Once the bulkheads are in place, water will be pumped out to enable that work.

The Rock Island District heavy gate lift crane Quad Cities moved into position and shortly after lunch deftly lifted the first of two miter gate leafs from the water. The Rock Island team brought both the necessary lifting capacity in the form of the huge Quad Cities and a skilled work force that in 2006 removed and replaced 31 similar gates up and down the Mississippi River.

With thunder storm clouds rumbling in from the west, Quad Cities and the crew lifted the gate and temporarily secured it before approaching wind, rain and lightning halted work for safety. Once the lightening and wind abated, Quad Cities and her burden were moved close to the Illinois bank.

The gate was laid down on a barge for work early Saturday morning.

On Sunday, Quad Cities lifted the second gate from the river and laid it down early Monday morning.

The work illustrates an important strength of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, its ability to build teams from districts throughout the region to bring the proper equipment and personnel skills to bear on work requirements. The work at Mel Price involves experts



The heavy gate lift crane Quad Cities did the heavy lifting to remove the two miter gate leafs from the downstream end of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam main chamber. Quad Cities secured the gate during an afternoon thunder storm before moving it to a barge along the Illinois river bank where it was laid down flat to be worked on.

from six districts and is primarily being shared by the Rock island and St. Louis districts, with Rock Island focusing on the miter gates while St. Louis takes on the lift gates. The team approach also sustains the Corps' ability to meet emergency contingencies throughout the inland waterways system.

The work at both ends of the chamber is being performed simultaneously to minimize impacts on the navigation industry. The periodic maintenance and replacement of key components will better ensure reliable and safe operation of the lock chamber that went into service October 10, 1989. While there is no good time to carry out this work, the schedule has been carefully coordinated with navigation interests to minimize its economic impacts.

Approximately 6,500 tows carrying more than 70 million tons of cargo pass through the Melvin Price locks every year.



Not just another summer camp!

by Karen Buehler
Mississippi Valley Division

The 5th Annual Society of American Military Engineers/Army Engineering and Construction Camp was held June 10 – 16 in Vicksburg, Miss. The week-long camp provides high school students the opportunity to experience the engineering profession through hands-on activities in engineering, leadership, communication, flexibility and team building.

The activities are performed under the supervision and guidance of Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Post members. They are geared to give a broad exposure to the engineering profession.

Forty students from communities throughout the nation resided for the week at the Morris Army Reserve Center, Vicksburg, home of the 412th Engineers Command.

The camp blends fun, education, hands-on experience and competition. Students are assigned to one of four teams, each led by a Pilot and First Mate. Teams are scored on their performance in each activity. The teams gained points by out performing the opposing teams. Points were given for technical tasks as well as for team spirit. Then, each evening during dinner, the scores were posted on a scoreboard. At the end of the week, points were totaled to find the most outstanding team and an awards ceremony was held at the close of the camp.

The camp hosted a vigorous schedule with each day filled with challenging activities. The engineering



Jimmy Waddle (l), camp director, mentors the students during a visit to the mat casting field in Delta, La., where articulated concrete mats (ACM) are made. The students, broken into to four teams, were involved in hands-on competition, each team making a section of the ACM.

field hosts many different disciplines and a goal of the camp is to introduce students to as many as possible during the week. From river engineering to structural analysis and design, wetlands delineation to soils engineering, the students schedule spilled over from day to evening.

“This camp is awesome,” said David Hall, a home-schooled student from Huntsville, Ala. “Both of my parents are electrical engineers and I’d like to go to University of Alabama in Huntsville to pursue engineering.”

One activity was a concrete exercise where the students got down and dirty in a laboratory at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development Center. Through a stimulating and exciting lecture the students had an opportunity to mix and cast some concrete in the lab for the “strongest concrete” competition.

Tim Mokey, a student from St. Joseph High School in Madison, Miss., said, “I really enjoy the hands-on stuff. Experiencing it, versus just hearing about it, makes all the difference in the world.”

Shane Michon, a St. Amant High School student from Prairieville, La., agreed. “I enjoy working on machines and I’d like to get a mechanical engineering degree at LSU. But I enjoyed working with that concrete. It was fun testing the strength and was an overall good experience.”

Some campers were just finding out about the camp for the first time but one student, Stephanie Beard, from St. Joseph’s High School in Baton Rouge, La., was a third generation camper.

(see SAME, next page)



“My sister is a mechanical engineering major and my brother is a chemical engineering major. Both go to LSU. Both of them went to this camp. My mom said it was my turn,” said Beard.

Considering computer and electrical engineering, Beard agrees that hands-on is so much better than lecture or “reading about it on the internet.” “I have really enjoyed meeting people interested in the same thing I am and getting to see how they think,” said Beard.

Beard especially enjoyed the river engineering segment of the schedule. Spending an afternoon aboard the Motor Vessel BENYAURD the students learned about the importance of the Mississippi River as a major transportation route and the fuel, commodities and other materials transported along the river.

Before boarding the BENYAURD students spent the morning at the mat casting field in Delta, La., making articulated concrete mats, which is one form of bank stabilization used on the Mississippi River.

Onboard the BENYAURD students saw how the mats are used and learned how dikes and revetments are constructed along the banks of the river to maintain channel alignment.

“How many people can say they got to pilot a towboat pushing a barge,” said Beard. “I got to turn the whole thing around right in the middle of the (Mississippi) river,” she said.

Beard said she appreciated how camp leaders team the students up and keep them in competition.



Students competed in a timed event assembling gears while onboard the Motor Vessel BENYAURD.

“It makes me try my very best all the time,” she said.

Funding for the camp is provided by SAME Posts, engineering and construction firms, and local city and business sponsors. Students are required to submit an application expressing their interest in engineering and pay \$50 to attend if selected.

“This is the first camp I’ve ever gone to that I actually enjoyed,” said Anthony Roper, from Pearl High School in Pearl, Miss., who also enjoyed meeting the other students.

All members of the camp were given an application for an SAME scholarship set aside for at least one member from the camp to be used at the Engineering School of his/her choice.

Jimmy Waddle, camp director, said that leadership volunteers dedicate a week to working with and mentoring the students. “We’re always looking for individuals to participate,” said Waddle. “It is rewarding to see how they interact and encourage our students and to see the top caliber of our youth that are the future of our country,” he said.

Camp leaders select one camper as the overall leadership winner. Cecily Sunday, North

Alegheny High School, Pittsburgh, Pa. won the “Larry Harper Leadership Award.” The award, which is named in honor of one of the founders of the camp, is awarded to the student who has shown outstanding leadership during the week,” said Waddle.

“Team members select an overall leader in each of their individual groups,” said Henry Dulaney, chair of the student administration committee. “Then camp leaders choose an overall leader from those four students. Sunday was selected because not only was she a great leader on her own team, but for all the teams as well,” said Dulaney.



Cecily Sunday receives the Larry Harper Leadership Award from Major General Ronald L. Johnson, Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The SPIRIT Points were awarded to each camper using the following criteria:

- S**upport – support your team
- P**articipation – participate with enthusiasm
- I**nvolvement – get involved and learn
- R**espect – respect all campers and staff members
- I**nterest – show interest in the topics being discussed
- T**eamwork – be a team player



-General-

The RTS program....which is in its third year and consists of five individuals in different disciplines.... has proven to be a very useful tool in providing expertise to districts within the region.

Additional RTS positions have been requested and are being considered by the RCC.

The Engineering and Construction CoP has pulled together to assist the New Orleans District in their enormous workload, taking on portions of both Hurricane Katrina and their normal civil works projects. To date this year alone, they have assisted with \$15 million in design effort and management.

WRDA

House & Senate versions of WRDA would potentially authorize almost \$7 billion in our region alone, including:

1. The Upper Mississippi Navigation Improvements (new locks) and Ecosystem Restoration at a total cost of over \$3.9 billion.
2. Louisiana Coastal Area at approximately \$1.3 billion.
3. Eight other MVD/MR&T projects at over \$1.3 billion combined.
4. Three new Environmental infrastructure programs with a combined total authorized appropriation of \$97 million (one in Ill. and two in La.).
5. Expansion of existing environmental infrastructure programs with increased expenditure limits and 23 new project locations.

6. Reconstruction of deteriorating flood control projects in Illinois and Missouri (\$30-\$50 million).

Nationally, there are several significant provisions:

7. Creation of the National Levee Safety Program in coordination with states.
8. Peer review of proposed projects.
9. Planning policy revisions, including development of revised principles and guidelines.

MRC

- August 2006 - During the annual low-water inspection trip, all seven members of the Mississippi River Commission, along with Major General Don Riley, past MRC president and current Director of Civil Works, visited the headwaters of the Mississippi River..... as well as the successful Grand Forks / East Grand Forks flood control project.
- June 4, 2007 - Mississippi River Commissioner, Mr. R.D. James, met with the Inland Waters Authority of India to discuss an exchange of engineering expertise to assist the IWA with improving navigation on its inland waterway system. Chuck Camillo, MVD Historian, presented the IWA an overview and history of the Mississippi River Commission. Mr. James represented the MRC.

- Upcoming meeting with the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River in August 07 during MRC Low Water Trip — An opportunity to explore the potential for a relationship with an organization that, like the Corps, has significant river management responsibilities. ICPDR home office is in Vienna, Austria.

Lastly, I want to reinforce the priorities and tenets of our new Chief of Engineers, LTG Robert L. Van Antwerp:

PRIORITIES

- Support GWOT and expeditionary missions
- Enhance quality of support to Soldiers, Civilians, Families, and the Public
- Complete transformation of the Theater Engineer Commands
- Effectively prepare for and respond to disasters
- Enable Gulf Coast recovery
- Deliver Military, Civil Works, and Research & Development programs and projects

TENETS

- Communicate transparently
- Focus on your mission
- Team with industry

HOOAH!